

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-40 and 42-45 will be pending, of which claims 1 and 42 are independent. Claim 41 has been cancelled and the dependency of claims 43-45 has been changed from claim 41 to claim 42. No new matter has been added. Withdrawal of all rejections is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 41 and 43-45 stand rejected as anticipated under 35 USC 102(b) over Tsuneyoshi et al. (JP 5-222236). Applicants note that claim 41 has been cancelled and that claims 43-45 have been made dependent on claim 42 instead of 41. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that these rejections are moot.

Claims 1-42 and 44 stand rejected as obvious under 35 USC 103(a) over Smith '908 (US 4344908) and Smith '689 (US 4436689) in view of Mannion (US 5310950) and Kobayashi et al. (JP 8-239386). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Regarding the independent claims (in view of the cancelation of claim 41 now only claims 1 and 42), the Examiner notes that the Smith patents disclose a polymer gel drawing process, and that the Mannion and Kobayashi references disclose nucleating agents. The Examiner also comments, on page 4 of the Office Action, that Mannion and Kobayashi disclose that the nucleating agents "act as clarifying agents for the resulting polymer, thereby improving transparency of the polymer...".

The Examiner, on page 5 of the Office Action, then concludes that "it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to make the polymers of Smith with a nucleating agent as taught by Mannion or Kobayashi to provide the above known advantages" (thus: to make "the polymers of Smith" transparent).

First, Applicants kindly ask the Examiner to point out why it would be advantageous to provide the articles of Smith with transparency, as the Examiner appears to contend. For instance, judging from column 4 of Smith '908, lines 35-41, there seems to be a focus in this patent on tire yarns. Why would it be advantageous to provide tire yarns with transparency?

Second, even if, *in arguendo*, the references could be combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, there is still lack of any reasonable expectation from these references that the use of nucleating agents may help the gel-process itself. The present Examples demonstrate the positive effect that the nucleating

agents may have. Compare, e.g., Table 2 (page 11) and Table 3 (page 12) of the specification. Table 2 lists examples that use only a polymer (polypropylene) and a solvent (decalin). In Table 2, gelation times are at least 30 minutes and the resulting films, except for the 5 wt% example, are of relatively low quality ("cracked, brittle").

Table 3 lists examples employing the same polymer and solvent, but this time also a nucleating agent. As evident from the results in Table 3, the gelation time and/or film quality is, generally, markedly improved relative to the examples of Table 2.

For at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 42 are not obvious over Smith '908 and Smith '689 in view of Mannion and Kobayashi et al. and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that all dependent claims are patentable by virtue of their dependency on claims 1 or 42 and for the additional features cited therein.

Therefore, all objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney for Applicants at the telephone number indicated below in order to expeditiously resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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